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ABSTRACT

This speaker looked at secondary education in the United States and made a number of generalizations concerning its history, the principles shaping it, its goals, and how these goals are chosen. Changes in secondary schools over the last fifteen years are examined in areas of educational goals, school size, and expenditures. Types of secondary schools are examined and compared in regard to enrollment. Principals' beliefs about institutional arrangements in 1965 and 1977-78 are compared. The paper concludes with assertions about the secondary school as one institution for the education of youth and some reflections about its future.
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GOALS AND PHILOSOPHY OF SECONDARY EDUCATION: THE SECONDARY SCHOOL AS ONE INSTITUTION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH

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GOALS AND PHILOSOPHY OF SECONDARY EDUCATION: THE SECONDARY SCHOOL AS ONE INSTITUTION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH

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The title of this presentation presents one major difficulty because the breadth of the topic requires the use of a number of generalizations for which exceptions easily can be found. Other presentations in the program will be of assistance in providing further explanations and examples which are not possible here, but also they may reveal some of the exceptions and points of disagreement. The title is helpful in that goals are indicated before philosophy, implying to me that this is not to be a philosophical treatment of what secondary education should be. Rather, philosophy, as it serves education in this country, is employed to interpret and make more rational the goals that have been thrust upon the schools and to raise questions about such things as the value and priority of a goal, inconsistencies and omissions among them and their relevance to a secondary education.

The first generalization about secondary education in the United States is that it has evolved in response to political, social, economic, and even geographical conditions. A second generalization is that change has been, and will continue to be, a primary condition of the American society. This means that the culture, which the schools are to impart, is not defined by fixed bodies of knowledge, sets of values, and systems of beliefs. If the schools are to use the culture as a source of content to educate youth to live productively, useful, and fulfilling lives, they are faced with serious questions--not the least of which is: What content shall be chosen, and how will it be taught to be of most use to youth to prepare them for a life which is continuously evolving as education is taking place?

Prepared for the International Seminar for Middle Eastern Educators, July 1979.

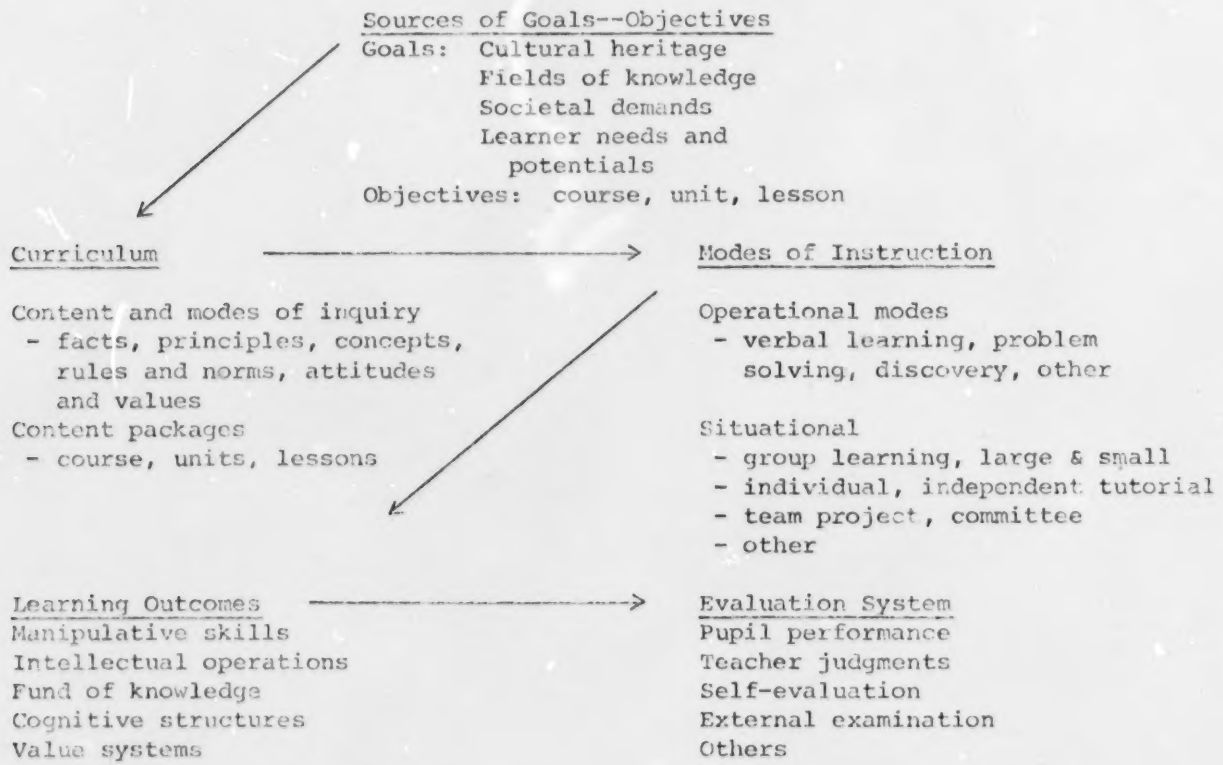
These two conditions--secondary education being responsive to societal needs and a changing culture from which to draw the content of instruction--place a burden upon those, like yourselves, who may not be intimately acquainted with conditions, problems, issues, and trends in this country and its cultural background. Indeed, these two conditions create problems for those who work closely with the secondary schools because, in one sense, public education is itself the arena in which the citizens of the country think about and work upon a philosophy of what the "good life" is and how to attain it. Some do this badly, some neglect to give it the attention it deserves, and some do it quite well. You will have occasion to observe and ask about this as you visit schools.

This brings us to the second portion of the title of this presentation, and an indication of how secondary education became tied to the two conditions noted. The secondary school as one institution for the education of youth implies the arrangements, structures, and nature of its program. Two overriding principles shaped the formation of the secondary school as it evolved in this country. The first is the ideal of equality of opportunity which served to place upon government the responsibility of providing schooling for all youth. Each person was to have an opportunity to prepare himself to compete fairly with every other person in an open society.

The second ideal is that of local control of education which, even though a myth in the legal sense--since education is legally the responsibility of each state--places the governance of schools ~~is~~ in the hands of local boards of education. Thus, schools are responsive to community needs and expectations. Paraphrasing one of our great educational philosophers, John Dewey, each child is to have the opportunity to escape the conditions into which he is born by being provided an education that is as good as a community might desire of its most enlightened citizens.

Elements of an Educational Program

A simple model might be useful to achieve a picture of an educational program and how goals are derived and translated into instruction. This model has come to be referred to as the Broudy-McCleary model of an educational program.



The five elements of an educational program which require attention are: Goals-Objectives, Curriculum, Instruction, Learning Outcomes, and an Evaluation System. This model might be a useful guide in raising questions, examining materials used in a school or just in providing a perspective into which to fit your observations and discussions. The total model can be summarized in one statement: From assigned goals, schools specify objectives which permit a curriculum(a) to be formulated; learners are exposed to the curriculum through modes of instruction in order to obtain certain learning outcomes that are measured by means of an evaluation system.

Goals of Secondary Education.

Goals are those general purposes specified for the secondary school which make up its total offering. As you know, the total school offering is broken down into areas of formal study (languages, sciences, mathematics, etc.), activities (athletics, music, journalism, etc.), and services (guidance and counseling, job placement, health, etc.). The activities and services often have areas of formal study, as in music and health; and the areas of formal study often have activities such as language clubs, science fairs, etc., or services such as community environmental studies, conservation, or assistance to the aged. However, goals are assigned to the school or sanctioned by policy-making bodies such as legislatures, state agencies (State Boards of Education), and local school boards.

A goal statement might be as general as "provide every student with an understanding of citizenship responsibilities" or as specific as "provide instruction in the ill effects of the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs." To be useful, each goal statement must be translated into teachable objectives and assigned to, and made the responsibility of, an instructional activity and/or service unit of the school.

Goals are formulated into public policy at national, state, and local levels. Studies, deliberation and debate, and the preparation and advancement of proposals that alter goals and priorities for the schools is a continuous activity. Complex political processes for doing this create a constant appraisal of the adequacy of education to impart knowledge, teach the cultural heritage, respond to society's problems, and meet the needs of youth (as indicated by the model).

Sometimes the debate about the goals and institutional arrangements for providing education has become intense and acrimonious. During the late 1950's debate about the secondary schools' programs in science and mathematics

turned to the question of whether the comprehensive high school be replaced by separate, specialized schools. During the first half of this decade (1970-74) debate centered upon: the isolation of youth from the realities of the community, inadequacies of vocational preparation, treatment of minorities in terms of equal opportunity to quality education, students' legal rights, and the like.

One listing of goals for secondary education might serve to provide a concrete example of what secondary schools are expected to attain for students. This listing resulted from a comprehensive project conducted at the University of Chicago. A study of an exhaustive number of writings about secondary education was undertaken to identify educational tasks which were attributed to secondary schools. Writings were selected from scholars, statesmen, scientists, commissions, etc., and an attempt was made to include critics of public secondary education as well as advocates of it. Statements of goals were collected and screened by a group of scholars to reach an irreducible minimum. The list is as follows:

Intellectual goals

1. A fund of information about many things.
2. Efficient use of the 3 R's--the basic tools for acquiring and communicating knowledge.
3. The habit of weighing facts and imaginatively applying them to the solution of problems.
4. A continuing desire for knowledge--the inquiring mind.

Civic/Social goals

5. A feeling for other people and the ability to live and work in harmony.
6. An understanding of government and sense of civic responsibility.

7. Loyalty to America and the American way of life.

8. Knowledge of world affairs and the inter-relationships among peoples.

Personal, Moral, Aesthetic

9. A well-cared-for, well-developed body.

10. An emotionally stable person, prepared for life's realities

11. A sense of right and wrong--a moral standard of behavior.

12. Enjoyment of cultural activities--the finer things of life.

Economic/Vocational

13. Information and guidance for wise occupational choice.

14. Specialized training for placement in a specific job.

15. The homemaking and handy-man skills related to family life.

16. Management of personal finances and wise buying habits.

Prioritizing of Goals.

A Q-sort technique was developed so that the choices of various groups (teachers, parents, scholars, business leaders) and others can be grouped and compared. A simple sorting process in used in which cards, each containing one statement, are arranged by an individual in the order of importance he wishes. The result is the identification of goals of high agreement/high importance, high agreement/low importance, and those goals about which there is little agreement about level of importance.

Although the list varies slightly in the wording of statements, the following list in rank order of importance was given by a national sample of high school principals in 1977:

Educational Goal Ranking in 1977-78	Ranking in 1965 Study
1. Acquisition of basic skills (reading, writing, computing)	1
2. Development of positive self-concept (and good human relations)	7

	(1965)
3. Development of skills and practice of critical intellectual inquiry and problem solving	4
4. Development of moral and spiritual values	2
5. Career planning and training in specific entry level occupational skills	
6. Knowledge about and skills in preparation for family life	
7. Understanding of the American value system (political, economic, social)	3
8. Preparation for a changing world	5
9. Physical fitness and useful leisure time sports	6
10. Development of skills to operate a technological society (engineering, scientific)	8
11. Appreciation for and experience with the fine arts	

You might compare your own ranking of goals to that of high school principals in this country. The listing by principals in this sample put intellectual and personal/social goals highest in priority.

School Size, Drop Outs and Expenditure Levels.

The secondary school in the United States has changed dramatically in several respects during the past fifteen years. As seen from the ranking of general goals given above, some shifts in priorities probably have occurred between 1965 and 1977. Development of self-concept and human relations moved from 7th place in 1965 to 2nd place in 1977, and moral and spiritual values moved from 2nd place in 1965 to 4th place in 1977. However, size and expenditure levels are two dimensions of significant change. High Schools are now much larger in terms of enrollments with fewer students dropping out before completion, and expenditures per pupil have risen sharply.

In 1965, 65% of all high schools enrolled fewer than 500 students; in 1977, only 23.8% of the high schools enrolled less than 500 students. At the other end of the enrollment scale, in 1965, only 5% of the high schools enrolled more than 2,000 students; by 1977, 12.7% of the high schools had enrollments of over 2,000 students. Size is an indication of the rapid urbanization of the society, but size, for high schools is an important element in providing a comprehensive program. The decade from 1965 to 1975 was a period of turbulence in American schools, but even so, the retention rates of schools improved slightly as shown by the chart. In addition, current estimates indicate that about 85% of all youth of high school age are enrolled in school and that attendance rates have also improved.

School size: 1965 - 1977 (in percents)

	Under 499	500-749	750-999	1,000-1,499	1,500-1,999	2,000-2,900	Over 3,000
1965	65.0	11.0	7.0	8.0	4.0	4.0	1.0
1977	23.8	16.2	12.6	20.4	14.1	9.9	2.8

Dropouts: 1965 - 1977 (in percents)

	Less than 2%	2% to 9%	10 to 24.9%	25 to 35.9%	More than 36%
1965	8.0	54.0	27.0	7.0	3.0
1977	5.0	62.0	28.0	3.0	2.0

Expenditure levels are a gross index of school quality. Studies tend to show that the high expenditure schools contain better qualified teachers, more varied programs and services and are ranked as having a greater number of characteristics indicative of excellence than do low expenditure schools. In 1965, 3.0% of all the high schools were spending less than $30.00 per pupil, per year; only 7.0% were spending more than $700.00 per pupil per year; the

median expenditure level was slightly more than $300.00 per pupil per year. By 1977, only 3.0% of all high schools were spending less than $500.00 per pupil per year while 3.0% were spending more than $2,400.00 per pupil per year; the median expenditure level was slightly more than $1,200.00 per pupil.

Expenditures per pupil: 1965 - 1977 (inflation rate 89%)

1965	%	1977	%
Less than $30.00	3.0	Less than $500	3.0
30 to 99	6.0	500 to 899	20.0
100 to 199	8.0	900 to 1,199	25.0
200 to 299	15.0	1,200 to 1,499 (Md)*	28.0
300 to 399 (Md)*	20.0	1,500 to 1,799	11.0
400 to 499	15.0	1,800 to 2,099	6.0
500 to 599	11.0	2,100 to 2,399	4.0
600 to 699	6.0	2,400 or more	3.0
700 or more	7.0		

*(Md) indicates median is located in this category.

These few statistics show rapid increases in school size and expenditure levels with slightly improved retention of students and slightly improved attendance rates. Other presentations will provide evidence of student performance and the nature of specific programs and services.

Types of Secondary Schools

In addition to the ideal of an education for all youth through high school is the ideal of the freedom of choice of the type of education to be acquired. This includes the option of attending a school other than that provided by the state. In the United States six classifications of high schools exist. These are: public comprehensive, public specialized, public alternative, parochial (church operated), religious affiliated (church sponsored), and

private. The chart below provides the distribution of schools by type, in percents.

Type of High School: 1965 - 1977, by percent of total

Type	1965		1977	
Public Comprehensive	82.0		82.5	
Public Specialized (technical, fine arts, etc.)	NA		2.0	
Public Alternative	NA		1.4	
Total Public (tax supported)		82.0		85.9
Parochial	7.0		6.0	
Religious Affiliated	7.0		7.1	
Private	3.0		.9	
Total non-public		17.0		14.0

The public comprehensive high school remains the one dominant institution for the provision of formal schooling. Even though under strong attack during the decade prior to 1977, the percentage of public comprehensive high schools increased slightly while the size and total enrollments increased greatly. Public comprehensive high schools enroll about 88% of all youth at the secondary level. These high schools attempt to provide a range of programs, suitable to ability levels and choices, of all youth who come to them. In addition to the comprehensive high school, some communities provide specialized high schools, and some provide what are called alternative high schools.

In the private sector, parochial and religious affiliated schools comprise about 13% of all the schools of the nation and the strictly private schools about 1.0%. Because of economic conditions, both inflation and rising costs of operation, these schools generally have had difficult problems. Their numbers have declined as has their share of the total number of youth attending

secondary schools--their total enrollments are estimated to be under 10% of all youth attending high school.

Educational Issues Surrounding Secondary Schools as Institutions

Surveys of educational leaders and political figures established a list of issues confronting secondary schools. This list was used in a study of the nation's high schools in 1977-78 and was responded to by high school principals in numbers proportional to the types of high schools as shown in the chart above. This list provides the issues thought to be of current importance to the secondary schools as institutions. Nineteen issues were identified as being of highest importance; fourteen of these issues were part of a 1965 study, so that comparisons of principals' responses can be made. Principals were asked to select one of four responses: agree without reservation, agree with some reservation, agree with many reservations, do not agree. The first two responses are classified as agree; the second two as disagree. A statistical test (standard error of proportions) showed significant differences between the responses of principals in 1977-78 and 1965 on all items compared.

Apparently principals in 1977-78 held very different beliefs than did principals in 1965 on every issue. A reflection about the priorities of goals, given in an earlier section of this paper, would indicate that with two important exceptions the goals of secondary education are relatively unchanging. Reflection about the issues surrounding schools would indicate that beliefs about the institutional arrangements for providing education have changed dramatically over a relatively short period of time.

Broad Educational Issues and Principals' Beliefs About Them: 1965/1977-78

Item	1977 Agree	1977 Disagree	1965 Agree	1965 Disagree
Schools require far too little academic work of students. Note: Base your response to this item only with reference to the school of which you are now principal.	56	44	16	84
The U. S. is not producing enough doctors and research scholars in the field of human needs such as energy, environment, etc.	63	37	22	78
Youth who are disinterested or hostile toward schooling should not be required to attend.	59	41	34	66
Schools should provide a general intellectual background and leave specific job training to other agencies.	10	90	67	33
Court decisions concerning racial segregation are correct as they apply to public schools.	49	51	75	25
High schools should develop special programs for educating the academically talented students.	92	8	19	81
The principle of universal secondary education is essential to American society.	81	19	76	24
Federal aid must be made available to private and religious secondary schools.	29	71	19	81
Court decisions concerning compulsory prayer and Bible reading are correct as they apply to public schools.	48	52	36	64
Certain limitations should be placed upon classroom discussions of political "isms" and "anti-isms".	39	61	24	76
There is a need to justify as practical each subject taught in secondary schools.	39	61	24	76
Grouping according to IQ or achievement scores is desirable in academic subjects such as math, English, and foreign languages.	53	47	82	18

Item	1977 Agree	1977 Disagree	1965 Agree	1965 Disagree
The academic year (compulsory) should be lengthened.	12	88	22	78
School attendance should be compulsory until high school graduation, or age 18.	15	85	39	71
The United States is not producing enough skilled technicians and "middle" level technical/managerial people.	62	38	NA	NA
High schools should design special programs for the handicapped, ethnic minority, and non-English speaking.	75	25	NA	NA
Equal treatment of the sexes, as embodied in Title IX guidelines, is a positive development in secondary schools.	68	32	NA	NA
Student rights in matters of due process, as being interpreted by the courts, is a necessary development in secondary schools.	54	46	NA	NA
Legislation and court decisions regarding confidentiality of records of students and staff is a necessary development in secondary schools.	62	38	NA	NA
High schools should not undertake major curriculum changes without first securing community support.	74	26	NA	NA

Even though the belief patterns of principals changed significantly relative to all issues about the institutional arrangements for secondary schools, note that: 1) for the first five issues in the list there is a complete reversal of opinion from 1965 to 1977-78; 2) for the next five items there is a shift toward stronger agreement about the issue; and 3) for the next four items there is a shift toward stronger disagreement. Relative to the last six items, although the issue of student rights is only 54% agree to 46% disagree, all items are strongly agreed to by principals of secondary schools.

A more detailed examination of educational issues is needed than can be provided here, but special attention might be given to them in discussions. From total presentation, including the data provided, certain assertions can be made about the secondary school as one institution for the education of youth, and some relfections can be presented about its future.

Assertions about Secondary Education and Its Future

1. The secondary school is strongly influenced by federal regulations, court decisions, state requirements, and community pressures screened by local board of education policies and school district administration.

2. Because of continuous cultural change and the expectations (demands) that educational programs respond to social issues, conditions, problems, and trends, schools are one focal point of debate and controversy.

3. In view of the ideal of equal opportunity, achieved largely through the attainment of a secondary education and the ideal of local control, schools need to provide educational programs that will accommodate the total range of ability, potential, and interest of all youth of the community they serve. They can be selective within program areas, but the institution must provide a defensible education for all.

4. The public comprehensive high school will continue to be the dominant model for the provision of secondary education. Although enrollments are declining sharply due to falling birth rates, these high schools will remain relatively large and will need a relatively high level of financial support.

5. Serious problems of a long-term nature will continue to be troublesome, and some will be intensified by declining enrollments and financial retrenchment. These include: a) the maintenance of specialized programs in all areas of advanced studies; b) provision of legally required services for the handicapped, equal opportunities for both sexes and expanded use of technologies in instruction; c) increased need to interact with community agencies to solve

antisocial behavior, combat the use of drugs and alcohol, and deal with crime and vandalism; and d) involve the community in decision making relative to programs, personnel and administration of the school.

6. We can expect to see the following political/legal conditions during the next five years:

   a. Federal controls will grow relative to categorical aid, civil rights, Title IX, etc.

   b. Desegregation efforts will be expanded in urban areas.

   c. Courts will further impose requirements on the school in relation to civil rights, due process, and equal opportunity.

   d. Organized teacher associations will become stronger and more militant.

   e. Accountability will be more widely imposed to require that schools demonstrate measurable results.

7. We can expect to see the following economic conditions during the next five years:

   a. Economic retrenchment involving certain educational funding.

   b. Increased resistance to local and state taxes in support of education.

   c. Increased pressures to support private/religious schools from public funds.

8. We can expect to see the following social conditions during the next five years:

   a. Concern for quality of life and energy conservation will bring major changes in programs and services.

   b. Parents and citizens will expect more opportunities to participate in establishing goals and priorities.

c. Increased crime, drug use, family breakdown, etc., will force program and management changes in the high schools.

d. Values and moral education will receive more emphasis.

9. We can expect to see the following technological and program changes during the next five years:

a. Mini-computers, computer assisted instruction, and related forms of technology will increase significantly.

b. Programs for adults in secondary schools will increase.

c. High schools will become more basics oriented, cutting back on options and special programs.

d. Most of the alternative high schools will disappear.

e. The diploma for completion of secondary school will carry a certificate of guarantee of basic skills.

The immediate future of the secondary school will not be a happy one. Many able teachers and administrators are now leaving, and this trend will continue. However, the secondary schools are strong and resilient institutions with a wide public support. There will be opportunity and challenge in problem solving and bright spots where schools will counter national trends. The picture is not one of expansion and growth, but it is also not one in which the problems are overwhelming.